

S T A T E N S E T N O G R A F I S K A M U S E U M

(THE ETHNOGRAPHICAL MUSEUM OF SWEDEN, STOCKHOLM)

SMÄRRE MEDDELANDEN

N:r 16

**A CONTRIBUTION TO THE STUDY
OF ANOMALOUS DENTITION AND
ITS RITUAL SIGNIFICANCE
IN AFRICA**

BY

S. LAGERCRANTZ

STOCKHOLM 1939

Museums

5/1
2
5.1.1
5.1.6

*This essay has been published
by financial support granted
by the Swedish Government.*

Printed in Sweden

STOCKHOLM 1939
TRYCKERI AKTIEBOLAGET THULE
301101

A CONTRIBUTION TO THE STUDY OF ANOMALOUS DENTITION AND ITS RITUAL SIGNIFICANCE IN AFRICA¹

INTRODUCTION

• Among the many interesting problems pertaining to the science of religion that Africa presents, abnormal teething may be noted. Of this, the aspects that will here be dealt with are the cases of (1) *children being born with teeth*, and (2) *the first tooth appearing in the upper jaw*. In this essay an attempt will be made to ascertain such notions and conceptions as are capable of explaining the origin of the customs that are connected with the above-mentioned dentitional anomalies, and also to determine as far as possible whether those customs are indigenous to Africa or not.

THE TEETHING ANOMALIES

If we begin with West Africa, it is stated from the Timne that a child born with teeth is called *avina* and that "a woman buries it . . . at once".² Among the Susu "a child born with teeth is a *yin*; it is carried to the river and put in; if it is a *yin*, it goes down the river in about half an hour; if not, it is a human child, which is buried in the river if it dies".³

¹ I here wish to express my gratitude for the kind assistance given me by Professor *M. Schulien* (of Rome) and Dr. *J. Hornell* (of St. Leonards-on-Sea), the latter having supplied me with excerpts from works not available in Sweden. Above all I wish, however, most heartily to thank Dr. *W. Schilde* (of Plauen) who has not only drawn my attention to a large number of instances but also for my use excerpted a considerable number of works.

² *Thomas, N.*: Anthropological Report on Sierra Leone I, London 1916. P. 111 (Schilde 31. 1. 1936).

³ *Thomas, op. cit.*, p. 39. A *yin* is a minor spirit, in this case obvious a malevolent spirit.

According to Monteil's investigations, the Kassonke were unacquainted with the duration of pregnancy; they even believed that it might last for several years, and the proof of this lay in the fact that children were occasionally born with teeth.⁴ When a child is born with teeth, the Kassonboura consult a *voro*, who by divination ascertains that the child is an incarnation of an evil spirit. It is then handed over to a man who takes it away and kills it. If the case were not dealt with in this way, the child would grow up and kill its father or mother.⁵

Among the Dagaba it was considered very unlucky if a child had a tooth in its mouth at birth, and its father must on no account see this tooth, which was pulled out.⁶ Among the Kusae, on the other hand, such children were killed.

Among the Fo it was customary to drown, or sell, children that were born with teeth. So it was done, too, if the first tooth appeared in the upper jaw. For this stamped the child as a *busu*, and "wenn er erwachsen ist, wird er allerlei unheimliche Dinge sehen und treiben".⁷ Among the Popo, on the other hand, if a child was born with teeth, or got its first tooth in the upper jaw, it was "welcome".⁸ In Dahomey it is considered a bad omen if the upper teeth come before the lower, if in a boy, his father will die, if in a girl, her mother will die.⁹

From the Yoruba Talbot records that "no harm was done to children born with teeth", but these were pulled out.¹¹ A different state of things prevailed among the Igbirra. If a child got its first tooth in the upper jaw, this was believed to involve the death of one of its parents "if the child was not destroyed or got rid of within the month". This custom was strictly maintained, but "nowadays a relative usually looks after it until it grows up".¹²

⁴ Monteil, C.: Les Khassonké, Paris 1915. P. 216 (Schilder 21. I. 1937).

⁵ Tauxier, L.: Le Noir du Soudan, Paris 1912. P. 329 (Schilder 31. I. 1936). *Voro* = soothsayer.

⁶ Rattray, R.: The Tribes of the Ashanti Hinterland II, Oxford 1932. P. 418.

⁷ Rattray, op. cit. II, p. 387.

⁸ Wolf, W.: Beitrag zur Ethnographie der Fo-Neger in Togo, Anthropos 7. P. 86.

⁹ Talbot, A.: The Peoples of Southern Nigeria III, London 1926. Table 22.

¹⁰ Herskovits, M.: Dahomey I, Glückstadt 1938. P. 274.

¹¹ Talbot, op. cit. III, p. 723. If the first tooth appeared in the upper jaw it was also pulled out (table 22).

¹² Holdsworth Groom, A.: The main characteristics of the "inland" Igbirras in Kabba Province, Journal of the African Society 9. P. 179.

Among certain Edo tribes (Esa, Kukuruku and Sobo) children that were born with teeth were "forbidden", and among the Bini they were killed.¹³ Among the Isoko it was customary to kill children that were born with teeth or developed the first tooth in the upper jaw "for the welfare of the family and the community".¹⁴

As regards the different Ijaw tribes, de Cardi made the general observation: "a curious custom . . . in most of these tribes is the throwing into the bush, to be devoured by the wild beast, any children born with their front teeth cut". The same author states that, inter alia, he had been able to record this custom from Brass, but that he had also noted an exception from the general rule, and this was in the case of a man in Twon Town.¹⁵ As a rule the Ijaw (Kalabari, Lower and Western Ijaw) cast away children that were born with teeth, and the same applied to cases where an upper tooth was cut first. The Okrika appear, however, occasionally have brought up children born with teeth, but these were held in ridicule.¹⁶

Concerning the tribes of the Niger Delta (presumably the Ijaw and Ibo) it has been more generally stated that children "who cut their teeth in an improper way" were killed,¹⁷ but considerable more particularized information is available as regards the Ibo.

¹³ *Talbot, op. cit.* III, table 22. Among the Bini an interesting custom has been observed, which unhesitatingly must be connected with the teething taboos. "If a Bini child has the upper teeth fall out before the lower ones, it is taken before the ancestral shrine, struck on the head and the forefathers are requested: If the child is bad so that its mother or father will die, then kill it". If this precept is not followed it is said frequently to happen that one of the parents will die, "in which case, however, nothing is done to the child" (*Talbot, op. cit.* III, p. 724). The underlying idea is no doubt that, if anything subsequently happens to the parents, these, by having disregarded an ancient tradition, would ultimately only have themselves to blame.

¹⁴ *Welch, J.*: The Isoko Tribe, Africa 7. P. 169.

¹⁵ *de Cardi, C.*: A short Description of the Natives of the Niger Coast Protectorate (in *Kingsley, M.*: West African Studies, London 1899), p. 487. As regards the exception De Cardi states that the man "had had the misfortune to be born with his upper front teeth through; whether it was because it was only the upper teeth that were through, or whether it was that the law is not so strictly carried out in the case of a male, I was never able to make sure of...". From De Cardi we also learn that "...it appears in his case some part of the law had to be carried out at his death, viz. he was not allowed to be buried, but was thrown into the bush, to fall a prey to the wild beasts, and any property he might die possessed of could not be inherited by any one, but must be dissipated or thrown away into the bush to rot". These observances go to show that earlier it had been customary to kill children born with teeth, but that this custom had subsequently been modified.

¹⁶ *Talbot, op. cit.* III, p. 724 and table 22.

¹⁷ *Kingsley, M.*: Travels in West Africa, London 1897, P. 472.

If a child was born with teeth, universal custom appears to have decreed that it must be cast away.¹⁸ If, on the other hand, a child cut an upper tooth first, a survey becomes more difficult. Originally, however, it appears that the child was killed because it showed "signs of being possessed of an evil spirit".¹⁹ From a number of Ibo tribes there is evidence of such having been the case,²⁰ and one statement from the Aboh is especially definite. From the last-mentioned tribe it is related that "another . . . cruel superstition is the sacrifice of such children as unfortunately cut the teeth first in the upper jaw. They believe it to indicate a wicked disposition, one hateful to the gods or Fetiches, and therefore a proper subject for immolation on the altars of their abomiabable worship".²¹

In latter times the custom has, however, been considerably modified, in that in some cases the child has been sold,²² while in other cases it was considered sufficient if it left the country for a more or less protracted period.²³ It seems, however, that instances of this exile are known to have lasted for life, or so it has at any rate been stated as regards the Degama group.²⁴ To this should be given the qualifica-

¹⁸ *Talbot, op. cit.* III, table 22. Under such conditions it was a matter of course that "les b  b  s monstrueux, venant au monde avec toutes leurs dents" were regarded as being taboo, *Correia, A.*: Le sens moral chez les Ibos de la Nigeria, *Anthropos* 18/19. P. 889 (Schilde 31. 1. 1936). It was only among the Ika (and apparent only the Asaba group) that it might happen that the child was allowed to live, but in such case it was in all probability a question of a purely secondary affair. Cf. *de Cardi, op. cit.*, p. 487, "I believe the Venerable Archdeacon Crowther has been instrumental in saving several of these kind of children in Bonny".

¹⁹ *Mockler-Ferryman, A.*: British Nigeria, London 1902. P. 286 (Hornell 27. 10. 1936).

²⁰ In this way the children were killed or thrown away among the Uzuzu-Ozuama (an Alensaw tribe), the Onitsha, Awka, and Eshielu (*Talbot, op. cit.* III, table 22). In other cases a medicineman was consulted, and on his decision it depended whether the child would be allowed to live or not. This was the custom among the Awhafia, Ikwo, Ngbo, and Okposi. A related custom occurs among the Oru, where the child was "given to the priest of Earth, who can do with it as he will (*Talbot, op. cit.* III, table 22).

²¹ *Allen, W. and Thomson, T.*: A Narrative of the Expedition sent by her Majesty's Government to the River Niger in 1841 II, London 1848. P. 243 (Hornell 27. 10. 1936). Cf. *Hutchinson, T.*: Fahrten ins Niger Delta, *Globus* 2. P. 52 (Schilde 31. 1. 1936).

²² E. g. among the Abaja, Awka, Mboaha, Nkanu, northern Ikwerre and the Oratta (*Talbot, op. cit.* III, table 22).

²³ Among the southern Awhawzara and the southern Edda the child has usually to stay for three years in some other town. Among the Iji and the Ezza the child and its mother had to go away for a year to another town (*Talbot, op. cit.* III, table 22).

²⁴ *Talbot, A.*: Tribes of the Niger Delta, London 1932. P. 170.

tion that the above statement has only been authenticated from the Ikwerre,²⁵ while a different course of action was observed among the rest of the Ibo tribes of the Degama group.²⁶ Lastly, in certain Ibo tribes it was possible for the first tooth to appear in the upper jaw without calling for any special measures,²⁷ but in the Bende district such children were "cursed and ridiculed".²⁸

From Calabar it is related that children born with teeth "will in a strict family be killed or thrown away in the bush to die as they please",²⁹ but the rule was not adhered to without exceptions.³⁰

From Nigeria we have further a number of authenticated instances relating to children that cut an upper tooth first. These were killed among the Ibibio(?), Tiv, Abaw, Bete and Orri, were allowed to live among the Abuan, Bafumbum-Bansaw, Yache, Iyala and Bakwiri, and, though they were disliked, among the Ekuri-Akunakuna and Ukelles, were welcomed or liked among the Ododop, Balung, and all Boki subtribes except the Bete. Children born with teeth were killed or thrown away among the Ekuri-Akunakuna, Mbembe, Tiv (?), Ododop, Ibibio, Boki, Abaw, Ekoi, one Bafumbum-Bansaw subtribe (the Melamba), Iyala, and occasionally among the Yache. With the latter and the Ukelles, such children, when not killed, were "more commonly left to die of neglect". Though disliked the children were not killed by the other Bafumbum-Bansaw subtribes, the Abuan and Bakwiri, and among the Balung such children were welcomed.³¹ If the first tooth appeared in the upper jaw, the Mbembe let the child live, but certain particular rules obtained if its parents possessed in their

²⁵ Talbot 1926, III. P. 726.

²⁶ The Alensaw and the Okoba took no steps in the matter, and among the Ekkpahia it usually came to pass that the child soon died, "probably . . . of neglect", and its parents had to take counsel with a medicine-man "as to what expiatory sacrifice should be made" (Talbot, *op. cit.*, III, p. 726).

²⁷ For the Alensaw and Okoba, see above. In this connection should, however, also be mentioned the Asia and the Ngwa. In the Owerri district it is stated to have prevailed as a general rule that the erratic tooth was pulled out, but, as we have already seen, to this there were numerous exceptions (Talbot 1926, III, table 22).

²⁸ Talbot 1926, III. Table 22.

²⁹ Kingsley 1889, p. 148; Hutchinson, *op. cit.*, p. 52.

³⁰ Kingsley 1889, p. 148. "They may, if the mother chooses to be bothered with them, be reared; but the interesting point is that any property they may acquire during life has no legal heir whatsoever. It must be dissipated, thrown away". How far this statement may have been influenced by de Cardi's (published in Kingsley's work) on the Twon Town man I have not been able to ascertain.

³¹ Talbot 1926, III, p. 728 and table 22. There are, however, some exceptions. Among the Abaw a child was liked if one tooth appeared in the upper jaw.

house a shrine dedicated to *Ikbinokpabi*. In that case either the child or the shrine had to be moved to some other house, and a child of that description was not under any circumstances to be allowed to get anywhere near a shrine dedicated to *Ikbinokpabi*.³²

If the first tooth appeared in the upper jaw the Ikumunu believed that either the child or its parents would die "in the course of the year".³³ Among the Ekoi there does not seem to have prevailed any general rule for dealing with anomalous teething, but in one Ekoi group (Akaju) it was supposed that either the child or one of its parents would die. In another Ekoi group (Keaka) it seemed to have made no difference if a child was born with teeth. This is no doubt ascribable to latter times' softening influence on ancient customs, as in some Keaka villages it was supposed that such children would become causes of trouble, and "they are buried at once by an old woman at the place of birth".

The Bamungkum believed that a child that cut its first tooth in the upper jaw was possessed of witchcraft: the Mbo threw away a child that was born with teeth. If, on the other hand, "shortly after birth one teeth came in the upper jaw, it was greatly liked, and it was believed that the boy (or girl) would grow up to be a very powerful juju man or priest."³⁴ Among the Bali, children born with teeth were disliked, and if the first tooth appeared in the upper jaw, they were "allowed".³⁵

From Meroe we have a somewhat uncertain piece of evidence. There we are informed, obtains "die absurde Sitte der Extraktion der Eckzähne, die bei den kleinen Kindern hier zuerst erscheinen".³⁶ As Meroe is situated in a region where it was universally practised to extract the canine teeth,³⁷ it seems probable that Berghoff was only describing an ordinary tooth-extraction, and there is hardly anything to indicate that his contribution would constitute an authentic instance of abnormal teething being dealt with.

³² Talbot 1926, III, p. 728. *Ikbinokpabi* is the Supreme Being among the Mbembe (Talbot 1926, II, p. 74).

³³ Talbot 1926, III, p. 728.

³⁴ Talbot 1926, III, p. 729. For the Keaka cf., however, table 22.

³⁵ Talbot 1926, III, table 22.

³⁶ Berghoff, C.: Die heutige Bevölkerung, der Insel Meroe, Globus 42. P. 140 (Schilder 31. I. 1936).

³⁷ Cf. the distribution-map by Lignitz, H.: Die künstlichen Zahnverstümmelungen in Afrika im Lichte der Kulturkreisforschung, Anthropos 14/15, 16/17.

From the Zande it is stated by Larken that if upper teeth appear first, they are not extracted, but they are regarded as unlucky, and are called *kere lindi*. It is remarkable that "no rites seem to be adopted to counteract their adverse influence on the child".³⁸ According to Evans-Pritchard it is regarded as a misfortune, "though not a serious one". "The child will always be a source of danger to other people's food supplies, and, at the same time, runs a risk of incurring death from magic made to protect the crops against people suffering from this malady". It is customary for one of the father's best friends to tell him that he must counteract his child (*boro kolinole*) by the help of a certain medicine, and if *boro kolinole* frequently eats of this medicine he will eventually die.³⁹

From the Popoie Delhaise states that "lorsque les dents de la mâchoire supérieure apparaissent les premières, on les arrache pour conjurer le mauvais sort".⁴⁰ From the Lolia-Ngolu (=Lalia) we are informed that "on appelle *mokwe* celui dont les dents supérieures ont poussé les premières. Celui qui se trouve dans ce cas ne peut, de tout sa vie, manger de viande fraîche, sous peine de rendre vaines les chasse de son groupe. Il en est réduit à manger de la viande séchée. Son influence néfaste s'exerce également sur la pêche".⁴¹

From the Lango it is said that "the natal influence of *jok* may be evil, and such is the view which generally prevails in the case of children who are born with teeth . . . or whose upper teeth are the first to appear".⁴² While we have no authenticated instance from the Nandi, it is however stated that among their close relations, the Kipsikis (Lumbwa), children born with teeth are killed, and that "any child so born has the greatest difficulty in obtaining an amte in

³⁸ Larken, P.: An Account of the Zande, Sudan Notes and Records 9. P. 26. *Kere lindi* = "bad teeth".

³⁹ Evans-Pritchard, E.: Witchcraft (*mangu*) amongst the A-Zande, Sudan Notes and Records 12. P. 176 (Schilde 31. 1. 1936). Cf. also Evans-Pritchard, E.: Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande, London 1937. P. 57—59. A man who cuts his upper teeth first is called an *irakörinde* (= "possessor of bad teeth"). "He is considered unlucky but not a serious menace . . . since he never kills people", but a possessor of bad teeth may "injure anything new besides firstfruits . . .".

⁴⁰ Delhaise, A.: Les Bapopoie, Bulletin de la Société Royale Belge de Géographie 36. P. 159 (Schilde 31. 1. 1936).

⁴¹ La chasse chez les Lolia-Ngolu, Bulletin agricole du Congo Belge 13: 2. P. 395 (Schilde 20. 6. 1937).

⁴² Driberg, J.: The Lango, London 1923. P. 139. *Jok* is the Supreme Being among the Lango.

after-life".⁴³ Before we pass on to the Bantu peoples⁴⁴ it may be mentioned that among the Masai no particular significance is attached to whether the first tooth appeared in the lower jaw or not.⁴⁵

From the Kikuyu Hildebrandt writes: "solche Kinder, deren obere Zähne vor den unteren durchbrechen, werden von den Wakikuyu . . . und anderen afrikanischen Völkern . . . getödtet". It appears, however, that Hildebrandt refers to children born with one tooth in the upper jaw, seeing that he goes on to state that "die Wakikuyu Mutter muss am Tage der Geburt eines solchen *mana mugirro*, dasselbe in eigener Person in eine Haut gebunden in den Wald tragen, in eine seichte Vertiefung legen, mit Holzasche überdecken und den Hyänen zum Frass überlassen".⁴⁶ In regard to teething Cagnolo points out that "if the upper incisors of a baby appear before the lower teeth . . . the child must die",⁴⁷ a statement which is also confirmed by Routledge. The latter also states that the father, instead of killing the child, had the alternative of making an offering,⁴⁸ and this mitigation of the ancient custom has also been observed by Hobley. According to the latter it was among the Kikuyu considered as an unlucky portent if a child cut its first tooth in the upper jaw. Such a child (*kingu*) was sent to its maternal grandmother.⁴⁹

From the statements of Orde-Browne, which mainly refer to the Embu and Chuka, it appears that it was looked upon as a bad omen if a child was born with teeth, and "great importance is also attached to the cutting of the lower or upper teeth first; indeed, irregularity in this matter was formerly liable to the destruction of the unfortunate child".⁵⁰

⁴³ Barton, J., Notes on the Kipsikis or Lumbwa of Kenya Colony, Journal of the Anthropological Institute 53. P. 50.

⁴⁴ What the conditions were that prevailed among the Elgeyo is more difficult of determination. When twins were born there was arranged a ceremony known as *tiswa*. "Without this protection the mother and father expose themselves to the risk of an early death, or the arrival of more twins". It is further stated that "this *tiswa* ceremony is also held when the birth of a child is marked by any unusual feature which may indicate the presence of an evil spirit", (*Massam, J.: The Cliff Dwellers of Kenya*, London 1927. P. 166—167). This does seem to indicate that the *tiswa* ceremony was also performed in case a child was born with teeth.

⁴⁵ Hildebrandt, J.: Ethnographische Notizen über Wakamba und ihre Nachbarn, Zeitschrift für Ethnologie 10. P. 395 (Schilder 31. I. 1936).

⁴⁶ Hildebrandt, *op. cit.*, p. 395.

⁴⁷ Cagnolo, C.: The Akikuyu, Nyeri 1933. P. 63.

⁴⁸ Routledge, W. and N.: With a Prehistoric People, London 1910. P. 150.

⁴⁹ Hobley, C.: Bantu Beliefs and Magic, London 1922. P. 154.

⁵⁰ Orde-Browne, J.: The Vanishing Tribes of Kenya, London 1925. P. 78.

Among the Kamba, according to Hildebrandt, it was not customary to kill children that developed their first tooth in the upper jaw.⁵¹ This is confirmed by Lindblom. It was however believed that the child (*mundu wa kyumilo*) had a bad influence on certain kinds of food, and also on the plants and animals from whom those foods were obtained. Neither was it allowed to drink milk before anyone else had drunk of it, "or else it will be like water, and the cow which gave it could never give nourishing milk again". The *mundu wa kyumilo* was further forbidden to eat bananas from the oldest tree of the plantation, as then the bananas would become woody and untable, but on the other hand it did not matter if bananas were taken from other trees. At meals it was the rule that everybody else must be eating before the child was allowed to begin, "otherwise the meat will be affected like the bananas", and these observances have been kept even after the child had grown up.⁵² The above data are supplemented by Hobley, who in particular refers to the Kamba of Kitui. If the first tooth appeared in the upper jaw it was regarded as "a very bad sign", and "such a child must not partake of the firstfruits of the fields, and it is said that, should it admire growing crop, that crop will never reach maturity. This evil influence, however, can to a great extent be mitigated if, when the first of the child's milk teeth drops out, the father cohabits with the mother".⁵³

From the Kamba in the Mombasa-district Johnston notes that "if an infant cut its lower before its upper teeth it generally died, since the suckling was painful to the mother",⁵⁴ which is equivalent to the child being left to die. This is presumably nothing but an untoward misprint,⁵⁵ and no doubt Johnston meant to say that "if an infant cut its upper before its lower teeth . . .", against which there remains the objection that, according to Hildebrandt, Hobley and Lindblom, children thus afflicted were not killed. It is conceivable that the two

⁵¹ Hildebrandt, *op. cit.*, p. 395.

⁵² Lindblom, G.: The Akamba (Archives d'Études Orientales 17), Upsala 1920. P. 37. *Umila* = "to come out in a certain place".

⁵³ Hobley, *op. cit.*, p. 159.

⁵⁴ Johnston, H.: Notes on the Tribes occupying Mombasa Sub-District, British East-Africa, Journal of the Anthropological Institute 32. P. 270 (Schilde 31. 1. 1936).

⁵⁵ If the Kamba of the Mombasa-district had been in the habit of killing infants that cut their first tooth in the normal way (i. e. in the lower jaw), such a practise would have resulted in the extinction of the Kamba group in question!

Kamba groups separated while the rule still obtained that infants producing the first tooth in the upper jaw must be killed. That these observances were more persistently kept by the Mombasa-Kamba is due to their having come under influence of the Duruma and Swahili, who were energetic upholders of the custom of killing infants with anomalous teeth.

Among the Taveta it was customary to kill such infants as were born with teeth,⁵⁶ as well as those whose first tooth appeared in the upper jaw.⁵⁷ More extensive is the information we have as regards the Chaga, who killed such infants as were born with teeth.⁵⁸ Widenmann states that infanticide had formerly been customary, but is no longer being practised, and among the infants that were killed were those which had developed their first tooth in the upper jaw, because they had been looked upon as ill-omened.⁵⁹ This is confirmed by Merker, who also mentions that in exceptional cases a child of this sort might be spared its life. The actual fact were then as far as possible kept secret, for it was believed that "ein solches Kind würde später seinen Ehegatten töten oder dieser würde bald nach der Heirat an einer Krankheit sterben". If it became known that the child had been unlucky in its teething "so haftet dies dem Kinde zeitlebens als Makel an. Einen solchen Mann wird nur ein von allem anderen verschmähtes Mädchen heiraten, ein derartiges Mädchen wird höchstens ein alter, hässlicher Mann zur Frau begehren".⁶⁰ The circumstance of an infant not invariably being killed if unlucky in its teething has also been observed by Dundas, who records that boys and girls were treated differently. He writes: "the child was formerly pronounced unlucky and killed. This was at any rate done if the child was a boy; in the case of girls, the mother and the child were often returned to the parents-in-law".⁶¹ Schwanhäuser, too, deals with teething ano-

⁵⁶ v. Höhnel, C.: Ostäquatorial-Afrika zwischen Pangani und dem neuentdeckten Rudolf-See, Petermanns Mitteilungen. Ergänzungsheft 99. P. 23 (Schilder 31. 1. 1936).

⁵⁷ Lindholm, G.: Anteckningar öfver Taveta-folkets etnologi, Ymer 33. P. 169.

⁵⁸ Merker, M.: Rechtsverhältnisse und Sitten der Wadschagga, Petermanns Mitteilungen. Ergänzungsheft 138. P. 23 (Schilder 31. 1. 1936).

⁵⁹ Widenmann, A.: Die Kilimandscharo-Bevölkerung, Petermanns Mitteilungen. Ergänzungsheft 129. P. 90.

⁶⁰ Merker, op. cit., p. 13.

⁶¹ Dundas, C.: Kilimandjaro and its People, London 1924. P. 201.

malies, but as he bases his statements on Widenmann and Gutmann, he has nothing new to adduce.⁶² There are even other customs that give further evidence of the importance in which teething was held by the Chaga. Until a child had cut its teeth it is not given a name, and when the teething has passed off in the normal way, festivities were arranged in celebration of the happy event.⁶³

We have no direct evidence as to how the Pare dealt with infants born with teeth, but seeing that all "regelwidrig gebornen Kinder" had to be killed,⁶⁴ it may well be supposed that children born with teeth were thus included. When a Pare girl had reached the age of four months she was handed over to an old woman, whose duty it was to supervise the appearance of the first four teeth. It was accepted as a rule that two teeth of the lower jaw must be the first to appear. Then a certain space of time must elapse before the first two teeth of the upper jaw come through, and if there are any variations in this respect, or if an upper tooth appears first, the child must be killed,⁶⁵ or the entire tribe would die out.⁶⁶ Baumann writes that prophylactic treatment was resorted to in order to ensure that the newborn infant would cut its teeth in the proper order:⁶⁷ "... wachsen dann zuerst die beiden vordersten oberen und unteren Schneidezähne", then everything was alright, but "zeigen sich jedoch zuerst seitliche Schneide- oder gar Backenzähne, so ist die Betrübnis gross, denn das Kind würde nach allgemeiner Ansicht, herangewachsen sterben und auch sämtlichen verwandten den Tod bringen. Man

⁶² *Schwanhäuser, H.*: Das Seelenleben der Dschagga-Neger, Amorbach 1910. P. 23.

⁶³ *Gutmann, B.*: Das Recht der Dschagga, München 1926. P. 310.

⁶⁴ *Kotz, E.*: Im Banne der Furcht, Hamburg 1922. P. 26.

⁶⁵ *Kotz*, op. cit., p. 33. In such case there were held a family council in which the relations of the father and the mother took part, and it was decided that the child could not be allowed to live. All the belongings of the child were collected together and the relations (or parents, *Dannholz, J.*: Im Banne des Geisterglaubens, Leipzig 1916. P. 63) carried the girl and her belongings out into the bush. Occasionally such children were instead thrown down a precipice, while sometimes children of strong physique were strangled. Another way was to place the child, when it was asleep, on the edge of a steep river bank, or a rocky ledge, so that when it awoke and began to move, it would drop over. According to *Dannholz*, op. cit., p. 64, among the high Mbaga mountains there is an inaccessible rock, 30—40 m. high, known as *ikamba letaga uwana*, which was used for this very purpose.

⁶⁶ *Dannholz*, op. cit., p. 63. Cf. *Kotz*, op. cit., p. 32.

⁶⁷ Cf. also *Kotz*, op. cit., p. 32.

zieht es daher meist vor, es in einem Bache zu ertränken".⁶⁸ It would, however, also appear that children whose teething had been unlucky on occasion were given a certain respite, for Dundas writes that infants "whose upper teeth appeared first, or in whom the lower incisors did not follow immediately on the upper incisors" were killed.⁶⁹

Among the Duruma it was believed that children born with teeth were "freaks of nature" and they were called "children of ill-omen" (*vioni*). Such children were stifled immediately upon birth, and buried in the hut of the parents, for it was believed that they were "the progeny of a spiritual agency, and would bring calamities upon the land if they lived".⁷⁰ It is further stated by Hildebrandt that the

⁶⁸ *Baumann, O.*: Usambara und seine Nachbargebiete, Berlin 1891. P. 237 (Schilde 31. 1. 1936). Cf. *Ankermann, B.*: Ostafrika (Das Eingeborenenrecht I), Stuttgart 1929. P. 167. After the Pare had come under German dominion it was forbidden to kill infants whose teething was abnormal (*Dannholz, op. cit.*, p. 64, *Kotz, op. cit.*, p. 33). The social surroundings that a child thus preserved by decree had to grow up against were, however, far from harmonious and in many ways contributed to placing the child beyond the pale of society and to making it a more or less asocially disposed. As among the Kamba, the child had to wait until everybody else had eaten, and if anyone fell sick, people used to put out the tongue at it and accuse it of having brought on the illness. Where men holding a council they would twit the child's father with bringing bad luck upon them. The upshot of it was not seldom that the father gave his child some slow-working poison, and if this was without effect he would try to attain his object by witchcraft (*Dannholz, op. cit.*, p. 63).

⁶⁹ *Dundas, C.*: Native Laws of some Bantu Tribes of East Africa, Journal of the Anthropological Institute 51. P. 235. Dundas' work partly consists of his own observations and is partly based on German material. He does not, however, state when he is using the latter, which makes it difficult to ascertain his sources. Cf. on this point *Ankermann, op. cit.*, p. 3. There have been cases where the parents have been unwilling to comply with the ancestral tradition. There is the story of a boy whose life his parents had managed to save, who had grown up, married and acquired a family, but many of the boy's relations had died. From an oracle it was ascertained that there existed a certain person who was going to kill all his relations, and nothing but his death would propitiate the ancestors. Many attempts were made at poisoning the man in question, but as these were unsuccessful it was in the end necessary to fall upon him and murder him, and at the same time his children also had to be killed "um den Zorn der Ahnengeister zu besänftigen", *Dannholz, op. cit.*, p. 64.

⁷⁰ *Griffiths, J.*: Glimpses of a Nyika Tribe (Waduruma), Journal of the Anthropological Institute 65. P. 270. It might occasionally happen that the parents managed to hide the fact that the child had been born with teeth, but a Duruma proverb says that "a child of ill-omen could not be hid for long". Once the rumour had got about that something was wrong, the women of the district went to the hut where such a child was supposed to be found. It was then taken possession of by force and put into a hole in the bed of the river *Mwache*. It was, however, important that the woman who carried the child either was "a spinster or a widow who had passed the critical period of life".

Nika used to strangle children who cut the first tooth in the upper jaw, and that the murder took place in the bush.⁷¹

As regards the Shambala (and evidently also the Kilindi) Storch states: "erst müssen die unteren, dann die oberen Schneidezähne erscheinen. Kommt aber erst ein seitliches Zahn, so wird das Kind den Ältesten des Dorfes übergeben, welche es heimlich erwürgen".⁷² As the motive of the killing, Wohlrab assigns the belief that children whose teething was abnormal were looked upon as ill-omened beings, "von denen für die Verwandtschaft Böses befürchtet wurde. Sie wurden meist schon in den ersten Tagen erwürgt, manche erst als Erwachsene, ja noch als alte Leute, wenn das Orakel sie als Urheber irgend einer Familienkatastrophe bezeichnete".⁷³ The Shambala killed also infants that were born with teeth, or with vestiges of teeth in the upper jaw. They used to fill a pot with water which was then heated. Then the child was caught up by the legs and held with its head in the water until it (*mazi ya waraa*) was suffocated. The killing of the child was done at the bidding of its parents. When the child was dead the father and mother dug a hole in the ground, and in this "stellten sie das Kind, wie wenn es gesund wäre".⁷⁴

It may be supposed that the Mbugu, too, used to kill infants that were born with teeth, and such as cut the first tooth in the upper jaw, because Storch states that "Kindesmorde und Begräbnissitten sind . . . von den Waschambaa und Wapare, je nach der Nachbarschaft der Wambugu, entnommen".⁷⁵ This is also confirmed by Rikli, according to whom "Krüppel oder auch nur mit geringen Fehlern behaftete Kinder werden frühzeitig vergiftet. Dieser Brauch geht so weit, dass Kinder, bei welchem z. B. nicht zuerst die Schneidezähne

⁷¹ Hildebrandt, *op. cit.*, p. 395. *New, Ch.* (Life, Wanderings, and Labours in Eastern Africa, London 1873. P. 118) only states that it was customary to kill children that were "deformed in any way".

⁷² Storch: Sitten, Gebräuche und Rechtspflege bei den Bewohnern Usambaras und Pares, Mitteilungen aus den Deutschen Schutzgebieten 8. P. 311.

⁷³ Wohlrab, J.: Das Recht der Schambala, Archiv für Anthropologie 44. P. 170. Cf. Ankermann, *op. cit.*, p. 167, where the same passage occurs. This refers back to Wohlrab's answer to Kohler's questionnaire (*Ankermann, op. cit.*, p. 1), and Dundas (Native Laws, p. 235) has evidently also made use of a transcript of Wohlrab's answer.

⁷⁴ Ankermann, *op. cit.*, p. 167. *Mazi ya waraa* = "a child who has died from the midwife's water".

⁷⁵ Storch, *op. cit.*, p. 324.

sondern ein Eckzahn durchbricht, ebenfalls dem Gifte zum Opfer fallen".⁷⁶

Among the Bondei a child might be "ill-omened from its birth", and among such was counted a child born with teeth (*mtumbwi*). An *mtumbwi* "is stifled or secretly put away by one of the grandmothers; the body is buried, and a cooking-pot with a hole in it is put over the grave", and thereafter the mother is capable of bearing a well-fated child.⁷⁷ This is confirmed by Dale, who states that if a child's upper teeth are the first to appear, then the child (*kigego*) "will almost certainly be killed". If the child were allowed to live, it would be in "perpetual danger, and any disaster which happens to its parents will be attributed to it".⁷⁸ At the burial of a *kigego* no special ceremonies were observed. He was badly buried, that the hyenas may dig him up. But generally the body is merely thrown away".⁷⁹ It may further be mentioned that Baumann, too, has observed that the Bondei killed such children as cut their first teeth in the upper jaw, because they were supposed to bring bad luck.⁸⁰ No doubt it was these very coast regions of the former German East Africa that Norton referred to when he wrote "it is said to be difficult in German East Africa for a Christian mother to come to church for fear her *kigego* child should be made away with by its grandmother if left alone".⁸¹

Among the Swahili it was customary to kill at once any child that was born with teeth,⁸² and the same rule applied in cases of the first tooth appearing in the upper jaw.⁸³ In corroboration of this we have

⁷⁶ Rikli, M.: Bei den Wambugu im Usambaragebirge, *Übersee- und Kolonialzeitung* (Der Kolonialdeutsche) 9. P. 153 (Schilder 25. 5. 1937).

⁷⁷ Abdy, D.: Notes on Utani and other Bondei Customs, *Man* 24. P. 166 (Schilder 31. 1. 1936).

⁷⁸ Dale, G.: An Account of the principal Customs and Habits of the Natives inhabiting the Bondei Country, *Journal of the Anthropological Institute* 25. P. 185 (Schilder 31. 1. 1936).

⁷⁹ Dale, *op cit.*, p. 239. Very peculiar is the rule by which it is laid down that two infants must not laugh or smile at each other while playing together, for if they do, they will become *vigego* when cutting their teeth. On this account a mother will hold her hand in front of her child's face if she sees it laughing together with another child, Abdy, *op. cit.*, p. 166.

⁸⁰ Baumann 1891, p. 131.

⁸¹ Norton, W.: Customs of Central and South Africa, *Journal of the African Society* 14. P. 84.

⁸² Baumann 1891, p. 43.

⁸³ Burton, R.: The Lake Regions of Central Africa I, London 1860. P. 117. Cf. Burton, R.: Reise zum Tanganyika—See in Ostafrika, *Globus* 2. P. 138 (Schilder 31. 1. 1936).

Baumann's statement that if there did not first appear "die unteren, sondern die oberen oder seitlichen Schneidezähne oder Backenzähne", then the child was usually choked to death "durch Auflegen der Hand".⁸⁴ It is possible that this is what Steere alludes to when he writes: "a child that cuts its upper teeth first is sure to be unlucky".⁸⁵ That teething taboos were firmly anchored in Swahili culture is apparent from Baumann's statement: "ich betone, dass alle diese grausamen Sitten auch heute noch unter deutscher Verwaltung fortbestehen. Freilich bekommen die Chefs der Stationen, deren Ansichten in diesem Punkt die Leute wohl kennen, davon nichts zu hören".⁸⁶

The Zeguha used to kill a child that cut its first tooth in the upper jaw. Strangely enough it was "die geburtshelfenden Weiber" that wrung the child's neck, whereupon it was carried out in the bush, and there an empty pot was placed over the unburied corpse.⁸⁷ In this there may be some inconsistency inasmuch as it would appear that children born with teeth are referred to. It is related of a certain Mbega (a Zeguha man) that he was denied his inheritance by his brothers and sisters. Their argument was that "Mbega is not human; he is an evil thing". This was proved as Mbega's parents had hidden him away as soon as he had been born. They had loved him, but he had evidently been "a cross-toothed child", one whose first tooth had appeared in the upper jaw. On the death of the mother his brothers and sisters had by divination ascertained that Mbega had caused her death. They had asked their father to kill Mbega, but he had refused. The brothers and sisters then resolved to kill Mbega if he did not leave the country, as all the deaths in the family must be ascribed to him.⁸⁸

The Arabs of Zanzibar regarded as monsters such children as cut their first tooth in the upper jaw. Instead of killing the child they however "after a *Kitmah*, or perlection of the Koran, make it swear,

⁸⁴ Baumann 1891, p. 43.

⁸⁵ Steere, E.: On East African Tribes and Languages, Journal of the Anthropological Institute I. P. CXLVIII (Schilder 31. 1. 1936).

⁸⁶ Baumann 1891, p. 43.

⁸⁷ Hildebrandt, op. cit., p. 395.

⁸⁸ Abdallah bin Hemedi bin Ali Liajjemi: The Story of Mbega, Tanganyika Notes and Records I. P. 40. Seeing that Mbega was hidden away as soon as he was born, it seems more probable that he possessed a tooth at birth.

by nodding its head if unable to articulate, that it will not injure those about it".⁸⁹

Among the Saramo a child "who cuts the two upper incisors before the lower" is known as *kigogo*. In Burton's time a *kigogo* was either killed or sold to a slave-trader "under the impression that it will bring disease, calamity, and death into the household".⁹⁰ According to Velten such a child is killed,⁹¹ or given away to some person (known to the parents) living in a town on the coast, as it was never their custom to keep with them a child of this category.⁹² A piece of evidence showing the significance of abnormal teething is also contained in Krelle's description of a Saramo funeral. When the grave has been half filled in, the conductor of the funeral rites among other things asks the deceased whether his death has been caused by some ritually unclean child.⁹³

The Doe,⁹⁴ und Kwere⁹⁵ killed children which cut the first tooth in the upper jaw. Lastly, in regard to the coastal regions of Tanganyika Territory it may be mentioned that "früher wurden im Lindi-Hinterland Kinder . . . die mit Zähnen zur Welt kamen . . . in der Regel getötet".⁹⁶

The Sabei believed that if the first tooth appeared in the upper jaw in a boy, the father would die, and if in a girl, the same fate

⁸⁹ *Burton, op. cit.*, p. 117; p. 138 in Globus.

⁹⁰ *Burton, op. cit.*, p. 117; p. 138 in Globus. Cf. *Krauss, H.*: Volksmedizinische Beobachtungen bei den Küstennegern Deutsch-Ostafrikas, Korrespondenzblatt der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Anthropologie, Ethnologie und Urgeschichte 49. P. 75. "Solche Kinder wurden früher häufig getötet, jetzt nehmen sich die Missionen ihrer an".

⁹¹ Cf. *Ankermann, op. cit.*, p. 167.

⁹² *Velten, C.*: Schilderungen der Suaheli, Göttingen 1901. P. 240. Before the child is given away, a consultation must take place between the nearest relatives, and the parents of its father and mother come together.

⁹³ This refers to twins, a child born in some abnormal way, or one who had cut its upper teeth first, *Krelle, H.*: Beiträge zur Kenntnis der Saramoreligion, Archiv für Anthropologie 23 (Neue Folge). P. 226.

⁹⁴ *Ankermann, op. cit.*, p. 167.

⁹⁵ *Dundas, Native Laws*. P. 235.

⁹⁶ *Fülleborn, F.*: Das Deutsche Njassa- und Ruwuma-Gebiet, Berlin 1906. P. 62 (Schilderung 31. 1. 1936). With regard to the late German East Africa it is stated by *Ankermann, op. cit.*, p. 166: "es gibt aber auch Kinder, die wegen gewisser Vorgänge bei der Geburt oder bei ihrer ersten Entwicklung als gefährlich oder unheilbringend angesehen und daher beseitigt werden". Among such are above all counted children "bei denen die oberen Schneidezähne vor den unteren hervorbrechen (Baziba, Wapimbwe, Wakimbu, Wabende, Wakara, Wapare, Waschambala, Wadoe, Wasaramo, Wangoni)". In cases where instances described in detail are to be found we shall further on recur to some of the above-mentioned tribes.

would overtake the mother. A goat was therefore sacrificed to *Oiki*, and a medicine-man then broke out the offending teeth and thus saved the life of the parents.⁹⁷ From the Gesu it is merely stated that "little importance was attached to the order in which the first teeth were cut, though if the lower teeth came first it was considered satisfactory".⁹⁸ From the Soga it is related that "in almost all clans it was considered dangerous if the upper teeth appeared before the lower".⁹⁹ The parents are apprehensive as to what might further happen, and they give a dance to the gods to preserve the child from evil "because such a child will cause the death of its parents if it is allowed to live without this ceremony being performed to avert the evil".¹⁰⁰

Emin Pasha observed that abnormal teething was looked upon as an evil omen among the Nyoro. A medicine-man was sent for, and he performed "gewisse Tänze".¹⁰¹ Roscoe stresses that it was considered of evil portent if a child cut its first tooth in the upper jaw. Such a child (*khabona*) was believed to cause deaths in the clans of both its father and mother, and "offerings were made to gods and ghosts to atone for the wrong which must have been the cause", and a medicine-man was sent for to extract the offending teeth. No matter what its rank might be, such a child might never come into the king's presence.¹⁰² It may be mentioned that the passage just cited only refers to abnormal teething within the royal family, but the same beliefs prevailed also among the common people.¹⁰³ If a pregnant Huma woman happened upon black ants in the path she must not step over them without first spitting, or throwing grass, on them. If these precautionary measures were neglected, her child would cut its first tooth in the upper jaw.¹⁰⁴

A child whose teething had been unlucky was called *kitenda* among

⁹⁷ Roscoe, J.: The Bagesu and other Tribes of the Uganda Protectorate, Cambridge 1924. P. 74. *Oiki* is the Supreme Being of the Sabei.

⁹⁸ Roscoe, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

⁹⁹ Roscoe, *op. cit.*, p. 122.

¹⁰⁰ Roscoe, J.: The Northern Bantu Tribes, Cambridge 1915. P. 217.

¹⁰¹ Stuhlmann, F.: Die Tagebücher von Dr. Emin Pascha I, Braunschweig 1917. P. 418 (Schilder 15. 4. 1936). Cf. *Emin Bey*: Journal einer Reise von Mruli nach der Hauptstadt Unyoros, Petermanns Mitteilungen 25. P. 186 (Schilder 15. 4. 1936).

¹⁰² Roscoe, J.: The Bakitara or Banyoro, Cambridge 1923. P. 165. *Khabona* = "an unlucky thing".

¹⁰³ Roscoe 1923, p. 258. Cf. Roscoe 1915, p. 241 "it was said to be an evil omen when a child cuts its upper teeth before the lower ones".

¹⁰⁴ Roscoe 1923, p. 241.

the Kondjo. A sacrifice was made to the gods in order "to remove their displeasure, lest evil should ensue".¹⁰⁵ Whether the Ganda used to kill children that cut their first tooth in the upper jaw cannot be determined. We are only informed that "as soon as a child showed signs of teething, it was watched anxiously by the mother, for if it cut the upper teeth before the lower, this was regarded as an evil omen that it would ill-treat its mother when it grew up".¹⁰⁶ From Ankole it is only stated that if the first tooth appeared in the upper jaw "it was an ill omen for the parents, and the child was taken away and cared for by some relative until it cast these teeth".¹⁰⁷

Among the Ziba, children were not given names before the first teeth had appeared,¹⁰⁸ a custom undoubtedly connected with fear of abnormal teething. That this is so may be inferred from the Ziba custom of killing children that had been unlucky in their teething.¹⁰⁹ From the Haya it is on record that "les monstres, enfants difformes ou à dentition irrégulière, étaient exposés aux crocodiles",¹¹⁰ and if among the Hunde a child developed its first tooth in the upper jaw it was regarded as a portent of ill-luck.¹¹¹ The Bashi considered it a very favourable omen if a child had teeth already at birth, and all the better if it had two teeth, both in the upper and the lower jaw. This especially refers to the royal family, as it applies to the heirs of the kingship. For a pretender to the throne it was also necessary to prove (under the attest from two witnesses) that he had been born feet first.¹¹²

The Songola regarded it as a visitation if a child cut its teeth in an abnormal way, but did not tax the child (*kikila*) with its misfortune; at the most its father refused to give the child a share of the yield from his hunting and fishing. It is of interest to note that "un *kikila* ne se verra pas repoussé par les femmes, comme cela se passe chez

¹⁰⁵ Roscoe 1924, p. 142.

¹⁰⁶ Roscoe, J.: The Baganda, Cambridge 1911. P. 59.

¹⁰⁷ Roscoe, J.: The Banyankole, Cambridge 1923. P. 114; Roscoe, J.: The Bahima a Cow Tribe of Enkole, Journal of the Anthropological Institute 37. P. 107; Roscoe 1915, p. 125. "It is considered unlucky for a child to cut its upper teeth before the lower teeth are out".

¹⁰⁸ Stuhlmann, F.: Mit Emin Pascha ins Herz von Afrika, Berlin 1891. P. 724.

¹⁰⁹ Ankermann, op. cit., p. 166.

¹¹⁰ Césard, E.: Le Muhaya, Anthropos 32. P. 824.

¹¹¹ Viaene: Uit het leven der Bahunde, Congo 10: 2. P. 51 (Schilder 12. 3. 1937).

¹¹² Norden, H.: Auf neuen Pfaden in Kongo, Leipzig 1926. P. 28 (Schilder 31. 1. 1936).

les Warega, et si c'est une femme qui est dans ce cas, celle n'en sera pas moins qu'une autre recherchée en mariage".¹¹³

Among the Rega, if things go wrong with the teething, the mother informs the father. The latter then calls together "tout le monde" in order that they may ascertain for themselves the exact state of things, seeing that the occurrence must be regarded as a misfortune that has befallen the village as a whole. Away from the village a hut was then immediately built for the child (*dino*) as it was not allowed to live together with the rest of the villagers, a prohibition which was maintained during the whole lifetime of the child. His food was prepared separately, and he had to eat it apart from the others, and when as grown up he tried to take part in the social life of the village, he was scorned and insulted. If a woman consented to live with him, the same social ban was applied to her. The *dino* must not touch seeds that were to be planted, as then the crop would be spoiled, neither was he allowed to eat bananas from any plantation used by the villagers, for then the bananas would rot. Lastly it is stated that "si c'est une femme qui est *dino*, elle deviendra souvent la compagne d'un malheureux déshérité qui se condamnera volontairement à partager son sort".¹¹⁴

Among the Holoholo a child that had cut its first tooth in the upper jaw (*kiliba*) was regarded as an evil omen. The mother carried her child to a river¹¹⁵ or exposed it to the wild beasts. The reason for this was that everything in the way of misfortune that befell the village must be ascribed to the ill-omened child. Every time a *kiliba* shed a tooth one of its relatives had to die, and its father was subjected to never-ceasing reproaches from his kinsmen for having brought such an ill-omened child into the family.¹¹⁶ In later times, however, the parents have more and more begun to depart from the ancient custom of putting away a *kiliba*.¹¹⁷

From the Rundi it is stated that children who cut their first tooth

¹¹³ Delhaise, Ch.: Chez les Wasongola de Sud, Bulletin de la Société Royale Belge de Géographie 33. P. 125.

¹¹⁴ Delhaise, Ch.: Les Warega (Collection de Monographies Ethnographiques V), Bruxelles 1909. P. 154.

¹¹⁵ Schmitz, R.: Les Baholoholo (Collection de Monographies Ethnographiques IX), Bruxelles 1912. P. 145. This was done when the child's father and relatives had ascertained the fact.

¹¹⁶ Delhaise, Ch.: Chez les Warundi et les Wahorohoro, Bulletin de la Société Royale Belge de Géographie 32. P. 490. If the mother tried to hide away the child "il serait chassé par la suite, non seulement du village mais du tout le pays et ne pourrait vivre que là où l'histoire de sa naissance ne serait pas connue".

¹¹⁷ Schmitz, op. cit., p. 145.

in the upper jaw were supposed to bring bad luck and therefore they were cast away in the bush,¹¹⁸ and the Twa of Urundi acted in the same way.¹¹⁹ According to Delhaise, however, a Rundi child that was unlucky in its teething (*kalasa*) was comparatively well treated and on the whole regarded as an ordinary child. On the other hand a *kalasa* was never allowed to eat of the first harvest from a reclaimed piece of ground as this would have an adverse effect on the future yield. Moreover, the mother was however almost forced into divorce because "la femme qui a engendré un tel fils, ne peut plus avoir de relations avec le père, sinon celui-ci mourrait".¹²⁰ It seems conceivable that Delhaise's narrative must refer to later times when the Rundi did not any longer obtain the older custom of killing a *kalasa*. Among the Ruanda it was customary to kill any child that was born with teeth and any child that cut the first tooth in the upper jaw as they would cause the death of one of the parents or themselves.¹²¹

The Karra used to kill children that cut the first tooth in the upper jaw, "sobald diese Tatsache allgemein bekannt wird . . . da sie sonst der Dorfgemeinschaft Unglück bringen würden".¹²² Among the Sukuma we again meet with the custom that children are not given names untill they have cut some teeth, and in this case two teeth are required, both in the upper and the lower jaw,¹²³ and we also know that the Sukuma used to kill children that cut their first tooth in the upper jaw.¹²⁴

Among the Nyamwezi a child whose teething had gone wrong (*kisalu*) was a visitation: it would cause the death of its father, mother, brothers and sisters — in fact it was a potential danger to the entire circle of its relatives. In the old days custom demanded the death of the *kisalu*, and it was left to die in the bush, or thrown on to an ant-hill. It should however be noted that "dans d'autres con-

¹¹⁸ Baumann, O.: Durch Masailand zur Nilquelle, Berlin 1894. P. 221. Cf. Meyer, H.: Die Barundi (Veröffentlichungen des Staatlich-sächsischen Forschungsinstitutes für Völkerkunde zu Leipzig I), Leipzig 1916. P. 111.

¹¹⁹ Meyer, *op. cit.*, p. 111.

¹²⁰ Delhaise, Chez les Warundi. P. 390.

¹²¹ Pages, A.: Ceremonies qui entourent la naissance d'un enfant et réclusion de la mère, Congo 15: 2. S. 222 (Schilde 16. 1. 1939).

¹²² Paulssen, F.: Rechtsanschauungen der Eingeborenen auf Ukarra, Baessler Archiv 4. P. 41 (Schilde 31. 1. 1936).

¹²³ Stuhlmann 1891, p. 674.

¹²⁴ Cunningham, J.: Uganda and its People, London 1905. P. 305 (Schilde 31. 1. 1936).

trées on attendait que ces enfants fussent devenues un peu grandelets, alors on les bannissait de la famille et du pays *kubingwa*; ils étaient obligés de se rendre à l'étranger pour trouver logis et nourriture; du moins leur vie était sauve".¹²⁵

Baumann states that "in den von Swahili vielbesuchten Gegenden, wie Urambo, hat sich der Küstenaberglaube verbreitet, dass ein mit Zähnen geborenes Kind dem Vater den Tod bringen würde. Es wird aber nur getötet wenn der Vater ein Häuptling ist".¹²⁶ From Irangi it is related that it was customary to kill children "bei welchen die oberen Zähne sich zeigen".¹²⁷

If among the Turu the first tooth appeared in the upper jaw, a male sheep was forthwith slaughtered, and "man reibt das Kind ganz mit dem aus dem Darm entnommenen Kot ab".¹²⁸ From the Gogo we have only a piece of negative evidence to the effect that infanticide was not customary, "selbst bei Kindern . . . die mit Zähnchen geboren wurden (Wasagara-Sitte) oder denen die oberen mittleren Schneidezähne zuerst wachsen (Wataguru-Sitte)".¹²⁹ Among the Hehe it was forbidden to have angry words with a child that had cut its first tooth in the upper jaw, because "wenn du mit ihm zankst, droht dir den Tod".¹³⁰ The southernmost instances from East Africa are represented by the Ngoni, who according to Ankermann, used to kill children that cut the first tooth in the upper jaw,¹³¹ a statement which is however contradicted by Richter.¹³² We may also add that such

¹²⁵ *Bösch, F.*: Les Banyamwezi, Münster in Westfalen 1930. P. 279. "D'une façon figurée on appelle de telles dents *mino ga kulumba*, dents qui lient le faitage ou dents du faitage, probablement à cause de leur position dans la mâchoire supérieure".

¹²⁶ *Baumann* 1894, p. 235.

¹²⁷ *Baumstark*: Die Warangi, Mitteilungen aus den Deutschen Schutzgebieten 13 P. 55.

¹²⁸ *Reche, O.*: Zur Ethnographie des abflusslosen Gebietes Deutsch—Ostafrikas (Abhandlungen des Hamburgischen Kolonialinstituts XVII), Hamburg 1914. P. 62.

¹²⁹ *Paulssen, F.*: Rechtsanschauungen der Wagogo, Baessler Archiv 6. P. 167 (Schilder 31. I. 1936).

¹³⁰ *Dempwolff, O.*: Beiträge zur Volksbeschreibung der Hehe, Baessler Archiv 4. P. 116 (Schilder 31. I. 1936). Cf. *Hodgson, A.*: Some Notes on the Wahehe of Mahenge District, Journal of the Anthropological Institute 56. P. 49. If the first tooth appeared in the upper jaw it was regarded as very unfortunate, and both the child and its relatives had to take medicines. A child of this description was much feared because "if, when grown up, he said to anyone, you will die or you will be eaten by a lion, and death took place the same day, he had to pay one male and one female goat as compensation, but could never be punished as a murderer or wizard. If there were no result of his words no action could be taken against him".

¹³¹ *Ankermann, op. cit.*, p. 166.

¹³² *Richter*: Rechtsgewohnheiten der Wangoni, Deutsches Kolonialblatt 1907. P. 673 (Schilder 20. II. 1936).

children used to be killed by the Yao, who regarded them as "un-lucky".¹³³

As regards the Konde no information of value is given by MacKenzie,¹³⁴ but from Fülleborn it appears that children born with teeth were not killed.¹³⁵ If a Safwa-child cuts its first tooth in the upper jaw, it is said to be affected with *xinkusa*, and, although the child was not killed, it was regarded as exceedingly ill-omened. Its father must see a medicine-man and ask him to prepare medicine, or else the mother would wither away, or, if she already had some children, these would die.¹³⁶

The Kimbu used to kill children that cut the first tooth in the upper jaw,¹³⁷ and the same customs was observed by the Mkulwe, who held the child (*kinkula*) to be ill-omened, "seine unabwendbare Bestimmung wäre die ganze Familie zugrunde zu richten, wenn es gross würde". To avert this, the child was immediately killed, and this was generally done by some old crones of the village.¹³⁸ Among the Nyamwanga *chinkula* means that a child's upper teeth have appeared first. The parents of such a child had to obtain medicine from the doctor to purify themselves, and the child was drowned in a pool of water. Were the child allowed to live, it would bring death upon its entire family. Chisholm also states that "this custom has a strong hold of the people, and . . . is still very prevalent".¹³⁹

From the Mambwe it is recorded that if the firstborn child of a woman is a boy "it is rarely allowed to live, further, if the girl cuts the two upper incisors before the lower teeth make their appearance, the child is usually strangled and thrown into a stagnant pool".¹⁴⁰

¹³³ Stannus, H.: The Wayao of Nyasaland, Harvard African Studies 3. P. 307.

¹³⁴ MacKenzie, D.: The Spirit-Ridden Konde, London 1925.

¹³⁵ Fülleborn, *op. cit.*, p. 352.

¹³⁶ Kootz-Kretschmer, E.: Die Safwa I, Berlin 1926. P. 25. The father must gather up the *xinkusa* teeth as they are shed in the second dentition. When this is done, the father informs the medicine-man, whereupon the latter makes a new medicine.

¹³⁷ Ankermann, *op. cit.*, p. 166.

¹³⁸ Hamberger, A.: Nachtrag zu den religiösen Überlieferungen und Gebräuchen der Landschaft Mkulwe, Anthropos 5. P. 803 (Schilder 31. 1. 1936). "Fragt man, worin denn eigentlich die Gefährlichkeit so eines Kindes bestehe, so weiss niemand etwas bestimmtes anzugeben; es ist einfach ein Unglückskind und müsste, gross geworden in irgend einer Weise Ursache des Verderbens der Familie werden."

¹³⁹ Chisholm, J.: Notes on the Manners and Customs of the Winamwanga and Wiwa, Journal of the African Society 9. P. 385.

¹⁴⁰ Johnston, H.: British Central Africa, London 1897. P. 417 (Schilder 31. 1. 1936).

Among the Fipa, custom prescribed that a child with abnormal teething (*kinkula*) must be killed. If this were not done, it would later on cause the ruin of the whole family.¹⁴¹ Similar evidence is also at hand from the Pimbwe and the Bende, who respectively, drowned or cast away children that cut the first tooth in the upper jaw.¹⁴² Among the latter it is stated by Avon that such children were exposed to the hyenas because, if they lived, they would bring disaster upon the king or the members of the royal family.¹⁴³ It may also be mentioned that, according to a more general statement, in Central and South Africa children were killed if they "cut the wrong set of teeth first".¹⁴⁴

The Bemba believed that if a child that had cut its first tooth in the upper jaw (*chinkula*) fell ill, some older member of the family would die, and "s'il continue à être malade, un autre doit aussi mourir". A *chinkula* was dangerous in many other ways besides. If the crops were ruined by the rains, or if hunting or fishing turned out unsuccessfully, everything was blamed on the *chinkula*.¹⁴⁵ This is corroborated by Delhaise, according to whom the mother frequently killed the child herself by drowning it or exposing it to beasts of prey. Occasionally some old crone was commissioned to attend to the exposure, but now and then the child was even allowed to live. In the latter case all disastrous events that subsequently happened were however blamed upon the *chinkula*, and on each occasion the father was scorned for having begotten an ill-starred child. Similar conditions also prevailed among the Tabwa, among whom a *kiliba* was equally unpopular as a *chinkula* among the Bemba.¹⁴⁶

When a child is going to cut its first tooth in the Luenadistrict, the parents and relatives satisfy themselves that it has appeared in the normal way. If everything is all right the mother is congratulated. If not, the child (*chinkula*) is generally handed over to some old crone, who in her turn drowns the child or exposes it in the woods as other-

¹⁴¹ *Fromm, P.*: Ufipa — Land und Leute, Mitteilungen aus den Deutschen Schutzgebieten 25. P. 100 (Schilde 31. 1. 1936).

¹⁴² *Ankermann, op. cit.*, p. 166.

¹⁴³ *Avon, R.*: Vie sociale des Wabende au Tanganika, *Anthropos* 10/11. P. 102.

¹⁴⁴ *Norton, op. cit.*, P. 84.

¹⁴⁵ *Labreque, Ed.*: La tribu des Babemba, *Anthropos*. 31. P. 912. *Chinkula* = "manger les hommes".

¹⁴⁶ *Delhaise, Ch.*: Chez les Wabemba, *Bulletin de la Société Royale Belge de Géographie* 32. P. 192.

wise its entire family would "perish shortly, root and branch".¹⁴⁷ This account is confirmed by Pirie, who states that both in north-eastern and southern Rhodesia the custom prevailed that a child that cut its first tooth in the upper jaw "was taken by its mother and cast into the nearest stream to drown". Pirie, while in particular referring to the Bemba in Rhodesia, further mentions that the act of drowning the *chinkula* was considered a duty, and it was believed that "should the child be allowed to live, all the relatives would die, and it only remain".¹⁴⁸

If a child cuts the upper front teeth before the lower, it was killed in Casembe's country. The child was unlucky, "it would bring ill-luck, missfortunes, *milando*, or guilt to the family". Should any Arab be near, however, they gave the child to him.¹⁴⁹

If a Lamba-child was born with teeth (*akasenshimberwa*) it was considered very fortunate, especially as "there is no apprehensive waiting to see that the lower teeth are out first".¹⁵⁰ Formerly it was customary to kill a child whose teething was unlucky. It was believed that if a child of that kind were allowed to live, then many people would die "as a result of the influence from the child, who is considered to be an *imfwiti* (wizard) embodying an *ichiwanda* (demon)". In fact, it was believed that one relative would die for each milk-tooth cut by the *uwamankunamwa*. If the parents did not cast away the child, such children as were subsequently born to them would also become *awamankunamwa*.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁷ Gouldsbury, C. and Sheane, H.: The Great Plateau of Northern Rhodesia, London 1911. P. 180. In the latter case the child is often rescued by its mother who secretly hands it over to the keeping of one of her relatives who is "ignorant of the affair, and who lives in some other village. Should the villagers of the mother's village find reason to suspect that the mother had hidden away her *chinkula*, the child is at once seized and drowned. Regarding *chinkula* Gouldsbury and Sheane state "perhaps the derivation is that which may not grow up — from *chi-i-kula*, from *kukula*".

¹⁴⁸ Pirie, G.: North-eastern Rhodesia, Journal of the African Society 6. P. 44 (Hornell 22. 11. 1936). In case the mother hid the child away so that it was allowed to grow up, and later on let out the fact that she possessed a *chinkula*, or if the secret was in some other way revealed, "then stones were taken and tied to the victim's feet, and it was thrown into the nearest pool". The parents did not mourn the child.

¹⁴⁹ Waller, H.: The last Journals of David Livingstone I, London 1874. P. 276.

¹⁵⁰ Doke, C.: The Lambas of Northern Rhodesia, London 1931. P. 133.

¹⁵¹ Doke, *op. cit.*, p. 138. The child was usually thrown into a pool of water, and the parents were not allowed to mourn their child. Cf. Melland, F.: In Witch-Bound Africa, London 1923. P. 50. "I have been informed... that throwing it (=the child) into the water is only done (locally) by the Ba-Lamba".

If a Kaonde-child cut its first tooth in the upper jaw it was thrown into the river. According to Melland it might also happen that such children were thrown into the bush because "the Kaonde women believe that if thrown into the water a child's spirit will become hostile. I have, however, met with no case of a child being thrown into the bush, but have met with cases of such infanticide by drowning among Ba-Kaonde and Ba-Luba".¹⁵²

If an Ila-child was born with a tooth it was, "until quite recently", customary to kill it, as else it was believed that "misfortune would overtake the family".¹⁵³ If a child cuts its first tooth in the upper jaw (*malweza*) it must be killed, for "such children bring misfortune, and . . . it is better to destroy the one rather than have whole families suffer".¹⁵⁴ The custom prevails among the Mbala of not burying a child that dies without having cut any teeth, but only throwing it away in the bush.¹⁵⁵ Among the Mbwela a child whose teething turned out wrongly (*mankunamwa*) was regarded "as the herald of a series of evil consequences to fall upon the parents and relatives", and the child was therefore killed.¹⁵⁶ Under British régime it is forbidden to kill any *mankunamwa*, and the Mbwela instead carry out a ceremony designed to purify the village from the evil spirit,¹⁵⁷ that manifests

¹⁵² Melland, *op. cit.*, p. 50.

¹⁵³ Smith, E. and Dale, M.: *The Ila-speaking Peoples of Northern Rhodesia I*, London 1920. P. 419. "We remember a woman who after giving birth overheard the old crones discussing how to destroy the child, for it had been born with a teeth in the mouth. The mother snatched up the child, stole out of the hut, and began to run to us for protection. In her weak state she was easily overtaken, and the last she heard of it was its pitiful wail as it was carried off to destruction" (*op. cit.*, p. 421.)

¹⁵⁴ Smith and Dale, *op. cit.* I, p. 420. The child was carried to a river or an ant-bear hole, and no one was allowed to mourn its death. "A *malweza* is an atrocity, a horrible thing: an infraction of a taboo" (Smith and Dale, *op. cit.* I, p. 347).

¹⁵⁵ Smith and Dale, *op. cit.* II, p. 114.

¹⁵⁶ When it came to killing a *mankunamwa*, the Mbwela observed customs similar to those prevalent among the Ila.

¹⁵⁷ "The evil spirit is said to come from a person who has died whilst still bearing a grudge against one of his relations. After his death it is still his restless spirit that causes the child to cut its top teeth first, and eventually causes the death of parents and relatives. No attempt appears to be made to discover which particular deceased person is the fount of these evils, but after each purification, that particular spirit is laid for ever". After the purification the child should suffer no disabilities whatsoever, but the records of the Chief's court show that he had to deal with many cases in which the older generation have laid the causes of ills to the preservation of a *mankunamwa*. Brelsford, V.: *A Bambwela Purification Rite*, Man 35. P. 53 (Schilde 31. I. 1936). Cf. also Brelsford, V.: *A Bambwela Purification Rite*. Nada 12. P. 29—30.

its presence by the occurrence of the *mankunamwa*. According to Brelsford, the old Mbwela men "are persistent in stating that they took this custom from the Baila", and he also stresses that "there is no reason to doubt this assertion, for the Baila have the same belief and practise a purification ceremony which is practically the same".¹⁵⁸

From the Mrewa district it is stated that it was regarded as an ill omen if the first tooth appeared in the upper jaw. Among certain tribes it was customary to kill any child thus afflicted, although not among the Zizeru, "though a fine had to be paid to the chief of the tribe, and certain roots obtained and rubbed on the teeth . . . to prevent their growing any more until the lower teeth made their appearance". It is further asserted that a bite from a child of this kind would never heal up.¹⁵⁹ In the Lomagundi district Nicolle met the Chinombe chief Chindu who had nothing of interest to report except "the unfortunate birth of a child with the two bottom teeth showing".¹⁶⁰ That teething was of a certain importance among the Makalaka is apparent from a passage in Mauch, in which it is said "wobei abergläubisch darauf gesehen wird, ob die unteren oder oberen (Zähne) zuerst erscheinen".¹⁶¹

In reply to my question what conditions prevailed in the Mozambique district on this point Prof. Schulien has kindly given the information that "unter den Todesfällen bei Kindern, die mir im Laufe von drei Jahren bei den Atchwabo bekannt geworden sind, war keiner, der auf falsches Zahnen zurückgeführt wurde. Auch irgendwelche auffällige Behandlung habe ich nicht wahrgenommen. Während des Zahnens wurden Zaubermedizinen angewendet und zwar solche, die die Mütter kennen, sonst geschah nichts Auffälliges. Falsches Zahnen in dem angegebenen Sinne ist dort unbekannt".¹⁶²

From the Lenge we only know that "an abnormality (*muhuku*) was formerly killed",¹⁶³ and that it is forbidden to refer to the first

¹⁵⁸ What lends especial interest to this is perhaps the circumstance that the ceremony just referred to is not, as far as I know, mentioned by Smith and Dale.

¹⁵⁹ *Edwards, W.*: From Birth to Death, Nada 7. P. 21.

¹⁶⁰ *Nicolle, W.*: A few Notes on *Baka Chinombe*, Nada 14. P. 28 (Schilder 21. 1. 1937).

¹⁶¹ *Mauch, C.*: Reisen im Innern von Süd-Afrika, Petermanns Mitteilungen, Ergänzungsheft 37. P. 38 (Schilder 31. 1. 1936).

¹⁶² Letter dated 6. 3. 1936.

¹⁶³ *Earthy, D.*: Valenge Women, Oxford 1933. P. 79.

four teeth as "teeth".¹⁶⁴ This makes one inclined to the belief that the Lenge also knew some other teething taboos although no mention is made of them. Among the Tonga, as also among the Pedi groups, it was regarded illomened if the first tooth appeared in the upper jaw. The child was, however, allowed to live, but on its death it was buried in wet soil.¹⁶⁵

Among the Venda obtained the custom of strangling by means of a rope, any child whose teething was "unlucky". It was believed that a person would die if bitten by a child of that description (*shenga*). If the child was allowed to grow up, "a girl on becoming pregnant, would cause the death of her husband, and a boy, on his wife becoming pregnant, would be the cause of her death".¹⁶⁶ From the Lobedu it is stated that certain persons must be buried in wet places, and among such are counted not only children that have cut their first tooth in the upper jaw, but also those who die before any tooth has appeared (*machechi*),¹⁶⁷ which is of special interest with regard to Junod's statements concerning the Tonga.

If a child was born with teeth the Chuana accepted this as a very bad omen, and thought it necessary to kill the child, because "to allow it to live would be to court ill-luck".¹⁶⁸ The same procedure was followed if the first tooth appeared in the upper jaw. If a child of that kind was allowed to grow up, "so kann eine Epidemie ausbrechen, und das ganze Dorf, in dem eine solche Person wohnt, erkranken oder irgend eine andere Plage sich einstellen".¹⁶⁹ That the Chuana used to kill children that cut their first tooth in the upper jaw even Livingstone observed among the Baka, and he believed the same custom to prevail among the Kwenä.¹⁷⁰

The Suto used to kill not only children born with teeth but also

¹⁶⁴ *Earthy, op. cit.*, p. 82.

¹⁶⁵ *Junod, H.*: The Life of a South African Tribe 1, Neuchatel 1912. P. 49.

¹⁶⁶ *Stayt, H.*: The Bavenda, Oxford 1931. P. 93. Stayt mentions that a missionary living near Sibasa was called upon by mothers who wanted him to extract the first tooth when it had been cut in the upper jaw. *Ushenga* = "to chew".

¹⁶⁷ *Krige, E.*: Agricultural Ceremonies and Practices of the Balobedu, Bantu Studies 5. P. 224 (Schildt 21. 1. 1937).

¹⁶⁸ *Brown, T.*: Among the Bantu Nomads, London 1926. P. 65. Cf. *Krüger, F.*: Das Recht der Sotho-Chuana-Gruppe der Bantu in Südafrika, Mitteilungen des Seminars für Orientalische Sprachen zu Berlin 38: III. P. 105 (Schildt 16. 10. 1936).

¹⁶⁹ *Krüger, op. cit.*, p. 105. Cf. *Brown, op. cit.*, p. 65.

¹⁷⁰ *Livingstone, D.*: Missionary Travels and Researches in South Africa, London 1857. P. 577.

those who cut their first tooth in the upper jaw.¹⁷¹ This is in part confirmed by Merensky¹⁷² and Endemann. The lastmentioned states that if a child was born with teeth, the woman assisting at its birth used to drown it in a pot filled with water in readiness against such an event.¹⁷³ From the Xosa it is related by Kropf that "ein Kind wird nicht getödtet nur manchmal, wenn . . . die Oberzähne zuerst zum Vorschein kamen, wurde es aus dem Leben, als der Familie Unglück bringend, geschafft".¹⁷⁴

When Livingstone was visiting the Makololo in 1859, he observed that one of Sekeletu's wives would not allow her servant's child to be killed for its having cut the upper front teeth before the lower.¹⁷⁵ At the time of Johnson's visit to the village of ~~K~~isanga (in Angola) great lamentation prevailed on account of a child having cut its first tooth in the upper jaw. This portended some great misfortune, for the child was believed to be possessed of an evil spirit (*kiximbis*). Johnson also learnt that if a child cut its first tooth in the upper jaw "in the interior of the country" it was customary to send for a medicine-man who concocted a mixture to purify the mother, whereupon the child, "at all events in the older days", was buried.¹⁷⁶ We also know that among the Kuanjama it was customary immediately to kill children that were born with teeth,¹⁷⁷ and, lastly, we have Bastian's statement from Loango. "*Umkisseansie* oder (im Innern) *Kischimbie* heissen die lebendig begrabenen Kinder, denen die oberen Zähne vor den unteren ausbrechen. *Kesa* ist ein mit Zähnen geborenes Kind".¹⁷⁸

¹⁷¹ *Krüger, op. cit.*, p. 105. Cf. *Grützner, H.*: Über die Gebräuche der Basutho, Verhandlungen der Berliner Gesellschaft für Anthropologie, Ethnologie und Urgeschichte 9. P. (78). "... es (= das Kind) wird uns umbringen, uns verderben".

¹⁷² *Merensky, A.*: Erinnerungen aus dem Missionsleben in Süd-Ost-Afrika, Bielefeld 1888. P. 43.

¹⁷³ *Endemann, K.*: Mitteilungen über die Sotho, Zeitschrift für Ethnologie 6. P. 36.

¹⁷⁴ *Kropf, K.*: Das Volk der Xosa-Kaffern, Berlin 1889. P. 123.

¹⁷⁵ *Waller, op. cit.*, p. 276.

¹⁷⁶ *Johnson, A.*: I marimbans land, Stockholm 1929. P. 177. Among certain Ambaka tribes the father is allowed to redeem the child by paying the mother's family for the mother's milk. A native Christian related how an Mbundu woman had married an Mbaka man and that their child cut its first tooth in the upper jaw. If the child was allowed to live, not only its father and mother but also all its relatives would die. The father, however, wished to redeem the child, which could not be done because the mother's family refused to agree to such a transaction.

¹⁷⁷ *Tönjes, H.*: Ovamboland, Berlin 1911. P. 147.

¹⁷⁸ *Bastian, A.*: Die deutsche Expedition an der Loango-Küste 1, Jena 1874. P. 174.

CONCLUSIONS

The African teething anomalies have been studied by Bastian,¹⁷⁹ Eilers,¹⁸⁰ Frazer,¹⁸¹ Kulischer,¹⁸² Ploss¹⁸³ and Westermarck,¹⁸⁴ but as their observations run on more or less general lines, the scientific questions involved in the religious aspect of this subject are not even brought up for discussion. It may therefore be of some use to recapitulate the conceptions that are connected with dental anomalies in Africa.

Irregular dentition was a sign that some demon, malevolent to mankind, had taken possession of the child, who on that account must be regarded as an evil omen, foreboding future misfortunes. By agency of the demon, the child developed an altogether harmful character: it constituted a threat to the preservation of food stores, to the crops, to good fortune in hunting and fishing (map 4). It was also a portent of far more serious calamities: illness and death threatened not only its parents and near relatives but even the community as a whole (map 4). Every time a tooth was replaced by a permanent one, it meant the death of some relative (Holoholo, Lamba), and the final result might even amount to the extinction of the entire family, so that only the child would be left (Bemba). Hence irregular teething was a dire affliction, and if the parents attempted to conceal it, they were guilty of a serious offence. It was their bounden duty (after consultation with their nearest relatives) to take steps for staving off the impending danger, and the only really effective safeguard in such cases was that of putting the monstrous infant to death (map 2).

Infanticide, although necessary, was however unpopular, and therefore other expedients were cast about for, whereby it might be

¹⁷⁹ *Bastian, A.*: Ein Besuch in San Salvador, Bremen 1859. P. 197.

¹⁸⁰ *Eilers, A.*: Die sozialen Beziehungen des Kindes bei den Bantunegern, Hamburg 1927. P. 39.

¹⁸¹ *Frazer, J.*: Taboo and the Perils of the Soul (The Golden Bough III), London 1911. P. 287.

¹⁸² *Kulischer, M.*: Die Behandlung der Kinder und der Jugend auf den primitiven Kulturstufen, Zeitschrift für Ethnologie 15. P. 192.

¹⁸³ *Ploss, H. und Renz, B.*: Das Kind im Brauch und Sitten der Völker II, Leipzig 1912. P. 53.

¹⁸⁴ *Westermarck, E.*: The Origin and Development of the Moral Ideas I, London 1906. P. 395.

possible at least in the main to nullify the ominous consequences of abnormal teething (map 3). The child could be banished from its own country for a more or less protracted period (in some cases even for life); the offending tooth could be pulled out, or potent incantations resorted to (Arabs of Zanzibar), or elaborate purification ceremonies carried out. In those parts of Africa where the practice of infanticide had been adopted, it was however found that none of the above described methods were capable of providing adequate security.¹⁸⁵ The evil propensities of the child were only temporarily scotched; if provokedly assaulted, or unjustly treated, it revenged itself by bringing on some misfortune or other, even illness or death (Hehe), and for that reason it was left to pass the remainder of its life more or less hated and isolated, nor was it ever given full civil rights.

It may easily be supposed that the parents spent a very anxious time while awaiting the teething, and that it is due to the fear of the first tooth appearing in the wrong jaw that many customs have come into being. Illustrative of this is that in East Africa the naming of the child was put off until it had completed its teething, and that a "Kavirondo" father will not touch his child before its first teeth have appeared.¹⁸⁶ It may further be mentioned that the wives of the sultan of Bukoba were isolated after childbirth until the infant had cut its first teeth,¹⁸⁷ and that in South Africa such infants as died before teething were not buried like ordinary people. And it was, too, the risk involved in the teething that made the Lamba hail with

¹⁸⁵ Extraction of the teeth is typically a secondary matter, and must be considered in connection with the parent's desire to conceal the irregular teething and thereby to save the life of the child. Both toothextraction and exiling the child (as well as selling it into slavery) occur in a number of places, but must be regarded as cases of convergence. Purification rites have generally come to be adopted in consequence of Colonial authorities having forbidden infanticide, and may therefore be regarded as a sort of forced substitute. In certain cases it is possible to trace the spread of such purification rites from the one tribe to another (e. g. from the Ila to the Mbwela), but as a rule they have arisen independently of each other. The reason why the Koran is used in incantations in Zanzibar is selfevident and does not call for any discussion in detail.

¹⁸⁶ *Lindblom, G.*: Notes ethnographiques sur le Kavirondo septentrional et la colonie du Kenia, *Revista del Instituto de Etnologia* 2. P. 403. This refers to the Yumbu and Vgusu.

¹⁸⁷ *Richter*: Einige weitere ethnographische Notizen über den Bezirk Bukoba, *Mitteilungen aus den Deutschen Schutzgebieten* 13. P. 68.

joy any child that was born with teeth, and one or two similar instances can also be explained in the same way.

A few words should also be said regarding children that were born with teeth. They were usually killed (map 1), and appear to have been even more dangerous than those whose teething was abnormal, which no doubt was owing to the fact that the former anomaly is of considerably rarer occurrence than the latter. Similar conceptions attached to children born with teeth as to those who cut their first tooth in the upper jaw. The former, too, were possessed by evil spirits and foreshadowed misfortune; they threatened their parents, relatives, nay even the whole community with ruin and death. Therefore society ordained that such children must be killed.

That these two categories of dental anomalies belong to the same cultural system is evident from the coincidence of their areas of distribution (map 1, 2), and partly also from the fact that the conceptions attaching to the anomalies are wholly identical (map 4). This latter circumstance is however not to be regarded as a decisive factor seeing that the central motive of infanticide also occurs in many childbirth anomalies. What is more to the point is, however, that these forms of abnormal teething have been observed within a western and an eastern nuclear area in which infanticide was practised (map 1, 2), and that marginal areas where the children were allowed to live (map 1, 3), border on the nuclear areas.

The eastern area of distribution — in so far as our material refers to children that cut their first tooth in the upper jaw — has been studied by Frobenius, who assigns it to his south-Erythraean culture.¹⁸⁸ In other words, this implies that the region in question is referable to the Arabo-Perso-Indian composite culture of the late German East Africa,¹⁸⁹ of which this distribution area is in fact

¹⁸⁸ *Frobenius, L.*: Die syderethräische Kultur, *Atlas Africanus* 2: 10 (Zahnaberglaube); *Frobenius, L.*: Bericht über Aufgaben und Arbeitsleistung der neunten D. (I. A.) F.-Expedition, *Ethnologischer Anzeiger* 2. P. (229), (Schilderung 31. 1. 1936). In these works, Frobenius has not taken up the western distribution area for discussion.

¹⁸⁹ Cf. *Hirschberg, W.*: Die arabisch-persisch-indische Kultur an der Ostküste Afrikas, *Mitteilungen der anthropologischen Gesellschaft in Wien* 61. P. 269—284; *Hornell, J.*: Indonesian Influence on East African Culture, *Journal of the Anthropological Institute* 64. P. 305—332; *Stuhlmann, F.*: Handwerk und Industrie in Ostafrika (*Abhandlungen des Hamburgischen Kolonialinstituts* 1), Hamburg 1910.

especially typical.¹⁹⁰ The customs connected with abnormal dentition have thus become established in the coastal regions, whence they spread through East Africa, which also explains how they have been maintained in their severest form in those parts (map 1, 3). From here these customs were disseminated northwards (Uganda and north-eastern Congo) and also southwards (Rhodesia, South Africa and Angola). In the north, as well as among tribes of preponderantly Hamitic (in certain cases — if it be preferred — Nilotic) basal composition (Gogo, Hehe, Masai, Turu), these taboos never attained adoption in their original severity (map 1, 3), but here the dangers threatening from abnormal dentition were capable of neutralisation by means of purification ceremonies. Here, too, is developed an area (mainly situated in the Congo) characterized by the secondary motive that dental anomalies would be detrimental to the crops, and to hunting and fishing (map 4).¹⁹¹ In the southern area, on the other hand, the original necessity for killing the infant is insisted on, which may be accounted for by the fact that the rites connected with the anomalies were brought along by Bantu peoples on their wanderings from East Africa and southwards. The Angola instances must in this

¹⁹⁰ In this particular instance we have a link with the Indian component. In passing, it may here be mentioned there are no instances from Arabia but that the Hindus regarded irregular teething with disfavour (*Buschan, G.: Abergläubische Vorstellungen beim Zahnen und künstliche Verunstaltungen des Gebisses im Kindesalter, Kinderärztliche Praxis* 6. P. 561), and even in a hymn in the Avesta it is mentioned as being illomened for relatives and members of the family (*Ploss und Renz, op. cit.*, II. P. 53), and similar conceptions seem to be indicated also by Indian ethnographic material of later times (*Roy, S.: Oraon Religion and Customs, Ranchi* 1928. P. 126). This is not the place for discussing non-African material relating to anomalous dentition, but it may be remarked that similar conceptions have been observed in Persia (*Buschan, G.: Die Sitten der Völker* II, Berlin. P. 274) and Europe. From Germanic area it is, for example, stated that "alle auf abnorme Weise geborne Kinder gelten als durch Elbeneinfluss veränderte Frucht, und nicht selten wurden solche lebensfähige Abnormiteten zu Heldengestalten in der Volkssage", which, inter alia, refers to children born with teeth (*Höfler, M.: Altgermanische Heilkunde in Neuburger, M. und Pagel, J.: Handbuch der Geschichte der Medizin* 1, Jena 1906. P. 470). Instances of a more general character are also known from Germany (*Bink-Zscheuschler, M.: Das Kind im deutschen Volksglauben, Der Erdball* 2. P. 237. Schilde 31. 1. 1936), and that danger threatened from the cutting of the first tooth in the upper jaw is also apparent according to material from Bohemia (*Ploss und Renz, op. cit.* II, P. 53) and Silesia (*Dreschler, P.: Sitte, Brauch und Volksglaube in Schlesien* 1, Leipzig 1903. P. 213) as well as from a number of instances recorded as regards Sweden (archives of Nordiska Museet, Stockholm).

¹⁹¹ Another interesting secondary motive is that from South Africa, viz. that a bite from the dangerous tooth would never heal up (Zizeru), but might even prove fatal (Venda).

respect be linked up with those of the Luba-Makololo section, and thus constitute an eastern element in Angola, of which, besides, many parallels could be cited.¹⁹² The reference from the Loango, however, ought to be regarded as an offshoot from Nigeria-Cameroon.

One might feel tempted to derive the West African distribution area from the East African, but important facts argue against such a solution. Connection between the two areas via the Zande-Popoie must be ruled out because the customs relating to the anomalies never gained a footing among the Zande-Popoie in their original, severe form. By them, the anomalies were not associated with any conception of danger to the family, but only with a palpably secondary motive, of which no counterpart whatever exists in the western area. Connection, by way of Angola, with Congo-Cameroon is theoretically conceivable, but a close review of the culturo-geographical structure of Africa will show the fallaciousness of such an explanation.

It must therefore be concluded that these two African areas of distribution have arisen independently of each other, although originally deriving from a common source. Of especial interest in this connection is a comparison with the African distribution of the world-creation myth (western Sudan, Nigeria, southern Congo, East Africa).¹⁹³ Baumann has shown how the East African area of distribution must refer back to the Arabo-Perso-Indian compound culture, and therefore constitutes a comparatively recent novation, considerably later in time than the West African area, which in this respect goes back to ancient Asiatic connections.¹⁹⁴ Many more parallels might be adduced, but in the result we get as a general impression that the same Asiatic culture elements are not infrequently found within both an earlier West African and a later East African area of distribution.

¹⁹² *Baumann, H.*: Lunda, Berlin 1935. P. 12.

¹⁹³ *Baumann, H.*: Schöpfung und Urzeit des Menschen im Mythos der afrikanischen Völker, Berlin 1936. P. 174—177.

¹⁹⁴ *Baumann* 1936, p. 177. The instances recorded from southern Congo must be regarded as offshoots of the East African ones. That, as Baumann (through with strong reservation) suggests, a spreading movement took place from the mouth of the Congo in the direction of the upper Zambezi, appears to me not very probable.

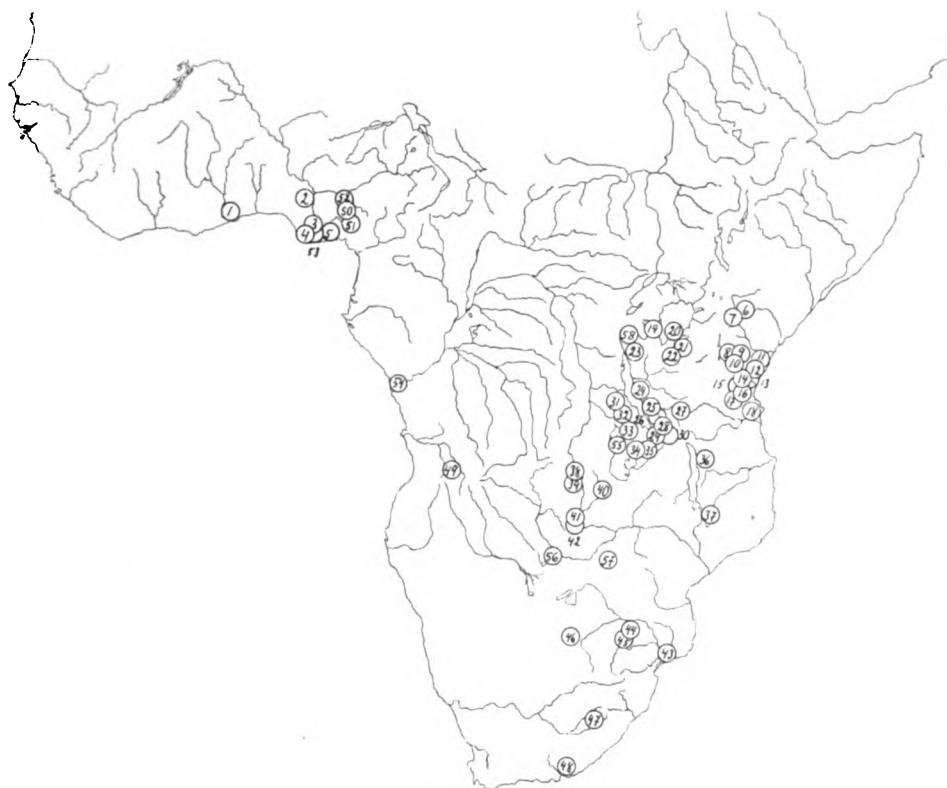
MAP. I. CHILDREN BORN WITH TEETH ARE KILLED O,
ARE ALLOWED TO LIVE Δ.

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Timne: Thomas. | 24. Irangi: Baumstark. |
| 2. Kassonbours: Tauxier. | 25. Lindi-Hinterland: Fülleborn. |
| 3. Kusae: Rattray. | 26. Ila: Smith and Dale. |
| 4. Fo: Wolf. | 27. Chuana: Brown, Krüger. |
| 5. Bini: Talbot. | 28. Suto: Endemann, Grützner, Krüger. |
| 6. Isoko: Welsh. Lower and Western | 29. Khassonke: Monteil. |
| Ijaw: Talbot. | 30. Dagaba: Rattray. |
| 7. Brass, Kalabari: de Cardi, Talbot. | 31. Popo: Talbot. |
| 8. Ibo: Correia, Talbot. Okpoto-Orri: | 32. Yoruba: Talbot. |
| Talbot. | 33. Bafumbum-Bansaw, Bali: Talbot. |
| 9. Boki, Iyala, Ukelle, Yache: Talbot. | 34. Bashi: Norden. |
| 10. Calabar: Hutchinson, Kingsley. | 35. Lango: Driberg. |
| 11. Ekoi, Abaw, Melamba, Mbo: Talbot. | 36. Elgeyo?: Massam. |
| 12. Kipsikis: Barton. | 37. Gogo: Paulssen. |
| 13. Embu, Chuka: Orde-Browne. | 38. Konde: Fülleborn. |
| 14. Kikuyu: Hildebrandt. | 39. Lamba: Doke. |
| 15. Djagga: Merker. | 40. Urambo: Baumann. |
| 16. Taveta: v. Höhncl. | 41. Chinombe?: Nicolle. |
| 17. Pare?: Kotz. | 42. Kuanjama: Tönjes. |
| 18. Duruma: Griffiths. Swahili: Bau- | 43. Susu: Thomas. |
| mann. | 44. Ibibio: Talbot. |
| 19. Mbugu: Storch. | 45. Ekuri-Akunakuna, Mbembe: Talbot. |
| 20. Bondei: Abdy. Swahili: Baumann. | 46. Tiv: Talbot. |
| 21. Shambala: Ankermann. | 47. Bakwiri, Balung: Talbot. |
| 22. Zeguha: Hildebrandt. | 48. Ruanda: Pagés. |
| 23. Sagara: Paulssen. | |



MAP. 2. CHILDREN WITH THE FIRST TOOTH IN THE UPPER JAW ARE KILLED.

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Fo: Wolf. | 26. Fipa: Fromm. |
| 2. Igbirra: Groom. | 27. Kimbu: Ankermann. |
| 3. Ibo: Allen and Thomson, de Cardi,
Hutchinson, Mockler-Ferryman, Tal-
bot. Orri: Talbot. | 28. Mkulwe: Hamberger. |
| 4. Isoko: Welsh. Western and Lower
Ijaw: Talbot. | 29. Mambwe: Johnston. |
| 5. Ibibio?: Talbot. | 30. Nyamwanga: Chisholm. |
| 6. Embu, Chuka: Orde-Browne. | 31. Holoholo: Delhaise, Schmitz. |
| 7. Kikuyu: Cagnolo, Routledge. | 32. Tabwa: Delhaise. |
| 8. Djagga: Dundas, Merker, Widen-
mann. | 33. Bemba: Delhaise, Pirie. |
| 9. Taveta: Lindblom. | 34. Luenadistrict: Gouldsbury and
Sheane. |
| 10. Pare: Ankermann, Baumann, Dann-
holz, Dundas, Kotz. | 35. Bemba: Delhaise, Pirie. |
| 11. Mombasa-Kamba: Johnston. Nika:
Hildebrandt. | 36. Ngoni: Ankermann. |
| 12. Swahili: Baumann, Burton, Steere. | 37. Yao: Stannus. |
| 13. Bondei: Baumann, Dale, Norton. | 38. Luba: Melland. |
| 14. Shambala: Ankermann, Storch,
Wohlrab. Mbugu: Rikli, Storch. | 39. Kaonde: Melland. |
| 15. Kilindi: Storch. | 40. Lamba: Doke, Melland. |
| 16. Zeguha: Abdallah bin Hemedi bin
Ali Liajjemi. Doe: Ankermann.
Kwere: Dundas. | 41. Mbwela: Brelsford. |
| 17. Taguru: Paulssen. | 42. Ila: Smith and Dale. |
| 18. Saramo: Ankermann, Burton,
Krauss, Velten. | 43. Lenge?: Earthy. |
| 19. Ziba: Ankermann. Haya: Césard. | 44. Venda: Stayt. |
| 20. Karra: Ankermann, Paulssen. | 45. Lobedu?: Krige. |
| 21. Sukuma: Cunningham. | 46. Chuana: Brown, Krüger. Baka:
Livingstone. Kwena?: Livingstone. |
| 22. Nyamwezi: Bösch. | 47. Suto: Endemann, Grützner, Krüger,
Merensky. |
| 23. Rundi: Baumann, Meyer. Twa:
Meyer. | 48. Xosa: Kropf. |
| 24. Bende: Ankermann, Avon. | 49. Mbundu: Johnsson. |
| 25. Pimbwe: Ankermann. | 50. Bete: Talbot. |
| | 51. Abaw: Talbot. |
| | 52. Tiv: Talbot. |
| | 53. Kalabari: Talbot. |
| | 54. Loango: Bastian. |
| | 55. Casembe: Waller. |
| | 56. Makololo: Livingstone. |
| | 57. Makalaka: Mauch. |
| | 58. Ruanda: Pagés. |



Map. 2.

MAP. 3. CHILDREN WITH THE FIRST TOOTH IN THE UPPER JAW ARE ALLOWED TO LIVE.



- | | |
|---|--------------------------------|
| 1. Popo: Talbot. | 17. Ganda?: Roscoe. |
| 2. Yoruba: Talbot. | 18. Lango: Driberg. |
| 3. Ekuri-Akunakuna, Mbembe: Talbot. | 19. Soga: Roscoe. |
| 4. Ekoi, Ikumunu: Talbot. | 20. Gesu, Sabei: Roscoe. |
| 5. Bamungkum: Talbot. | 21. Kikuyu: Hobley, Routledge. |
| 6. Boki, Iyala, Mbo, Ukelle, Yache: Talbot. | 22. Kamba: Hobley, Lindblom. |
| 7. Bakwiri, Balung: Talbot. | 23. Masai: Hildebrandt. |
| 8. Lolia-Ngolu: ? | 24. Turu: Reche. |
| 9. Zande: Evans-Pritchard, Larken. | 25. Gogo: Paulssen. |
| 10. Popoie: Delhaise. | 26. Zanzibar: Burton. |
| 11. Songola: Delhaise. | 27. Hehe: Dempwolff, Hodgson. |
| 12. Rega: Delhaise. | 28. Safwa: Kootz-Kretschmer. |
| 13. Hunde: Viaene. | 29. Zizeru: Edwards. |
| 14. Ankole: Roscoe. | 30. Tonga: Junod. |
| 15. Kondjo: Roscoe. | 31. Pedi: Junod. |
| 16. Nyoro: Roscoe. | 32. Dahomey?: Herskovits. |

MAP. 4. TEETHING ANOMALIES KILL RELATIVES O, AND ARE DANGEROUS FOR CROP, HUNTING AND FISHING Δ.



- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Kassonboursa : Tauxier. | 22. Nyamwanga : Chisholm. |
| 2. Igbirra : Groom. | 23. Holoholo : Delhaise. |
| 3. Isoko : Welsh. | 25. Bemba : Delhaise, Labreque, Pirie. |
| 4. Ikumunu, Ekoi : Talbot. | 26. Luenadistrict : Gouldsbury and Sheane. |
| 5. Nyoro : Roscoe. | 27. Lamba : Doke. |
| 6. Ganda : Roscoe. | 28. Mbwela : Brelsford. |
| 7. Soga : Roscoe. | 29. Ila : Smith and Dale. |
| 8. Sabei : Roscoe. | 30. Venda : Stayt. |
| 9. Djagga : Merker. | 31. Chuana : Brown, Krüger. |
| 10. Pare : Baumann, Dannholz, Kotz. | 32. Suto : Grützner, Krüger. |
| 11. Bondei : Dale. | 33. Xosa : Kropf. |
| 12. Shambala : Ankermann, Wohlrab. | 34. Zande : Evans-Pritchard. |
| 13. Zeguha : Abdallah bin Hemedi bin Ali Liajjemi. | 35. Lolia-Ngolu : ? |
| 14. Saramo : Krelle. | 36. Songola : Delhaise. |
| 15. Ankole : Roscoe. | 37. Rega : Delhaise. |
| 16. Nyamwezi : Bösch. | 38. Rundi : Delhaise. |
| 17. Urambo : Baumann. | 39. Kamba : Hobley, Lindblom. |
| 18. Bende : Avon. | 40. Mbundu : Johnson. |
| 19. Fipa : Fromm. | 41. Casembe : Waller. |
| 20. Mkulwe : Hamberger. | 42. Dahomey : Herskovits. |
| 21. Safwa : Kootz-Kretschmer. | 43. Ruanda : Pagés. |

